

# In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Volume 1, Issue 14, July 19, 2002

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## Message from the Mayor

By the time you read this, we will have symbolically cut the ribbon on the International Spy Museum, the first museum in the world to provide a global perspective on the subject of espionage. Seven years in development, the International Spy Museum is the first project to be awarded "Tax Increment Financing," a financing program created by the District government in 1998 to provide financial incentives to developers committed to creating more housing and retail opportunities in eligible areas.

This museum, which explores the craft, practice, history, and contemporary role of espionage, will provide an invaluable boost to revitalizing downtown DC with 250 new jobs.

The Spy Museum is located on F Street, NW, between 8th and 9th Streets and connects five historic buildings, including the Atlas and LeDroit buildings. The building facades have been meticulously restored to maintain the character of the streetscape, and a majority of the interior spaces have been preserved as they were originally configured.

The complex includes a museum store, private event space, and two restaurants: Zola and Spy City Café. There are 900 archival photos, two hours of audio-visual programs, and 15 mechanical and computer interactive displays integrated in dramatic settings. With over 600 artifacts, the museum will feature the largest collection of international espionage artifacts ever placed on public display. Many of these objects will be seen for the first time outside of the intelligence community. These artifacts will be used to illuminate the work of famous spies and pivotal espionage actions and bring to life the strategies and techniques of the men and women behind some of the most secretive espionage missions in world history.

Congratulations go to Milton Maltz and the museum professionals of the Malrite Company for their creativity and innovation and for investing in Washington, DC.

By restoring historic downtown sites, we give visitors yet another reason to venture off the National Mall and into the rich and vibrant neighborhoods that make Washington, DC a special place to visit. Through the continued support of projects like the International Spy Museum, we are helping to boost our economy, revitalize city blocks, and add texture and character to city life.

For more information about the Spy Museum, log on to its website at [www.spymuseum.org](http://www.spymuseum.org).

## The District Gains a New Sister City: Tshwane, South Africa

On Friday, June 28, the Mayor of Tshwane, South Africa and I signed an agreement declaring Tshwane and Washington, DC sister cities. What made this particular agreement so unusual was that we accomplished it via a live satellite hook-up.

Tshwane's executive mayor, Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa, signed the agreement on behalf of the city of Tshwane. During the teleconference, Father Mkhathshwa described Tshwane as a city torn between a first world lifestyle and third world problems. "Poverty is a serious problem faced by many people in our country," he said. Father Mkhathshwa hopes that the partnership with the District will play a positive role in helping to eradicate this problem.

Father Mkhathshwa and I also discussed common issues faced by many cities including the need for economic development, more tourism, and expanded access to technology. Additionally, we discussed the battle against HIV/AIDS.

This agreement will benefit the citizens of both cities as a result of increased interaction between the two cities in the future. Both cities will exchange information and cooperate on activities in the areas of public safety, economic development, social development, public administration, and citizens' participation in public policy.

The city of Tshwane, with an estimated population of 2.2 million, is the national capital of South Africa.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

[Advisory Neighborhood Commissions](#)

# Community Profile

## Ricardo Thornton – Advocate and Activist

Ricardo Thornton believes that “every person with a disability can have a voice.”

Abandoned at birth and born with mental retardation, Ricardo Thornton has overcome great obstacles to become a spokesman and advocate for individuals who are developmentally disabled. Ricardo spent the majority of his early life in an institution for people with mental retardation. While in the institution, he met the love of his life, Donna, who would soon become his wife and the mother of his son. The couple has successfully raised a son, who is now a teenager.

Ricardo currently serves as co-president of Project Action, a coalition of local self-advocacy groups that represent the interests of individuals with developmental disabilities. He also serves on the District's Developmental Disabilities State Planning Council and on the boards of University Legal Services and on the Positive Alternatives for Family Advisory Committee. Additionally, he has been extremely active in the Special Olympics, even traveling to South Africa to serve as an ambassador for the Special Olympics International. For the past 23 years, he has worked at the District's Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

Devoted to his own educational excellence, Ricardo serves as a great role model for others, with or without disabilities. His commitment and determination to improving the lives of those with developmental disabilities is extraordinary. He is also an expressive and articulate speaker.

Ricardo is the first adult recipient of the Mayor's Community Service Award. Each month, the Mayor's Community Service Award will recognize outstanding community service efforts in the District of Columbia.

The Mayor's Community Service Award is awarded on a monthly basis to one youth and one adult. Residents, community leaders, corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit and faith-based organization are encouraged to submit nominations to the DC Commission on National and Community Service (DC-CNCS). If you are interested in additional information regarding the Award, contact DC-CNCS at (202) 727-7925.

## City Files Lawsuit Against Companies Taking Advantage of Consumers

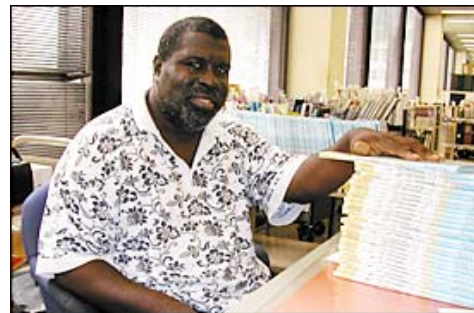
On Monday, July 8, Corporation Counsel Robert R. Rigsby announced that his office had filed a consumer protection lawsuit against the Steven A. Rosen Company, a public insurance adjuster, and CW Restoration Inc., a home improvement contractor. The suit, spearheaded by Assistant Corporation Counsel Wendy Weinberg and Senior Counsel Bennett Rushkoff, alleges that these businesses, working in concert, defrauded consumers out of tens of thousands of dollars of insurance money that insurance companies paid to repair consumers' fire damaged homes.

The complaint states that employees of the Steven A. Rosen Company solicit business from consumers during or immediately after a fire at their homes and offer to help them through their trauma, claiming that they could maximize insurance recoveries. Many of the people who use the Rosen Company are in fact referred to a contracting business, CW Restoration, which is run by William Suter, the same person who owns and manages the Rosen Company. According to the lawsuit, CW Restoration provides very little work for the money it receives, and much of the work that is done is shoddy.

The Office of the Corporation Counsel has received many complaints from consumers who used the Rosen Company and CW Restoration. These consumers have found themselves homeless, or with properties still in need of major work, well after the date that CW promised work would be completed, making them victims twice over.

The allegations in the suit include charges that the Rosen Company altered documents that the consumers had signed before submitting them to the insurance company. The Rosen Company allegedly made these alterations to maximize the amount that it could collect from the insurance company for itself.

At the request of the Office of the Corporation Counsel, on the same day that the suit was filed, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia issued a temporary restraining order against Mr. Suter and those working with him. The restraining order prohibits them from engaging in certain deceptive practices, orders the defendants not to destroy documents, and temporarily freezes certain of their assets.



Ricardo Thornton



LINK TO OTHER  
WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention  
and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

## Domestic Partnership Registration Program Launched

On Monday, July 8, I helped launch the District's Domestic Partnership Registration Program, which allows unmarried persons to register as domestic partners in the District of Columbia. Registration enables partners to be eligible to receive healthcare insurance coverage, if the District government employed one of the partners after 1987. Joining me at the launch were Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Councilmembers David Catania, Sharon Ambrose, Adrian Fenty, Jim Graham, and Acting Director of the Department of Health, James Buford.

This is the first step in the long-awaited implementation of the DC Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992. The District joins California, Connecticut, Maine, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington as well as 157 Fortune 500 employers, 3,960 private employers, non-profits and unions, 158 colleges and universities, 129 local governments, and 75 companies locally in offering domestic partner benefits for District employees and residents.

Originally passed in 1992, implementation of the law was delayed by a Congressional prohibition against the use of local funds for this purpose.

District residents registered under the program will be able to use annual or unpaid leave to care for a sick partner or a partner's minor dependents and visit partners under care in hospitals or nursing homes. To register, both partners must apply in person to the DC Department of Health, Vital Records Division at 825 North Capitol Street, NE. For more information, contact the Vital Records Division at (202) 442-9303, or visit the website at [www.dchealth.dc.gov](http://www.dchealth.dc.gov).

## District Activities



District officials — former and present — cut the ribbon at Woodmont Crossing, the city's newest apartment community east of the Anacostia.



Jim Bennett and Deacon Maccubbin join Mayor Williams in celebrating the opening of the Domestic Partnership Office by registering as domestic partners.



Mayor Williams greets parade watchers in the Palisades neighborhood on July 4.



His Excellency Samak Sundaravej, Governor of Bangkok, and Mayor Williams sign a reaffirmation agreement commemorating the 40th anniversary of the sister city agreement between Washington, DC and Bangkok, Thailand.



# Community News

- [DC Government and DC Chamber Launch International Business Development Office](#)
- [No Child Left Behind: Moving Beyond Compliance in the District](#)
- [Mayor's Statement on Proposed Change to District Flag](#)

[Click here](#) to view releases.

# Upcoming Events

07/20	<b>Hechinger Mall Walk</b> 2 pm 1601 Maryland Avenue, NE
07/22	<b>Ward 8 Walk</b> 1:30 pm Robert Walker Senior Building 22 <sup>nd</sup> and Savannah Streets, SE
07/30	<b>Town Hall Meeting</b> 7 pm People's Congregational Church 4704 13 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW
08/06	<b>National Night Out</b> Locations and Times of Events to be Announced

[Click here](#) to view the Mayor's daily schedule.

